

THE
DISPENSATIONS
PROPHETICALLY AND DOCTRINALLY CONSIDERED;

BEING

A COURSE OF LECTURES

DELIVERED AT MONTREAL,

BY

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THIRD LECTURE.

"THE ANTE-DILUVIAN DISPENSATION."

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"THE ANTE-DILUVIAN DISPENSATION."

The Second, or, as we may term it, "Ante-Diluvian Dispensation," commences at the 4th chapter of Genesis, and closes at the 14th verse of the 8th chapter. The scene opens not in Eden, the garden of happiness, where the first lay, but on the earth, cursed for man's sake, and under moral and physical disabilities that held out little prospects of either joy or peace. The nature of man had imbibed a totally different principle of thought, in one sense. "The Lord God had said," as we shall see, Gen. iii. 22: "Behold, the man is become as one of us to know good and evil," (an additional proof, I might add, that a moral image had nothing to do with our first-created image). But what a vast difference in the acquirement and the result of this fatal possession! With God, the knowledge of good and evil passes through the unsullied channel of his own Divine purity. With man, the knowledge courses its way to his intelligence through the perverted and foul channel of a carnal mind, and his acquirement is his curse: for this carnal mind is "enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be": so that the disease is a downright, incurable one.

As one of the most essential doctrines of our religion lies at the door of a thorough and clear understanding of this great and lamentable fact, you will allow me to draw your attention for a few moments to the word that expresses this property of the soul. It is called "*Phronéma*," and we have no single word in our language that fully explains it. Leigh, in his "*Critica Sacra*" (and whom Parkhurst quotes as authority, under the verb *Phroneō*), says that "*it comprehends under it the ACT and EXERCISE both of the MIND and of the WILL, and may be indifferently translated WISDOM, SENSE, AFFECTION, DESIRE.*" And perhaps I cannot better explain to you the force of the word than by saying that the same is used to express the mind and inclination of the Holy Spirit himself, influencing our spirits. So that we have brought, in opposition to each other, in their distinct character and effect (Rom. viii. 5), the

"minding of the flesh," which embraces its *wisdom, sense, affection, and desire*, and is death; and the "minding of the spirit," embracing the same effects of will, but is "life and peace."

Now, these two leading, ruling "minds" or "minders" are in direct opposition the one to the other. The will of man is not subject to the law of God; but, *what is still worse*, "NEITHER INDEED CAN BE." So that we possess a principle within us, so essentially, so radically, so unconquerably opposed to God, that it is called "enmity against God"; and you may pronounce of it, in the words of an Apostle, "Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter." And it is further stated (1 Cor. ii. 14) that this "natural man (with all his wisdom, sense and acuteness, affections and desires) receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are *foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.*" And there is no doctrine *more odious* to man, because *more humbling*, than this plain testimony that he is by nature born a child of wrath, and must remain dead in trespasses and sins, until quickened of God; and that his boasted reason is utterly at fault when brought of its own unsanctified power to receive the things of God. They are foolishness to him; neither can he know, love, or receive the things of God: and further, that this entire corruption is hereditary, and so complete, that, as the prophet says, an Ethiopian may as well try to change his skin, or a leopard his spots, or a man to bring a clean thing out of an unclean, as that this "carnal minding" can exert a good will or affection towards God, or ever reach the true knowledge of heavenly things.

The very first scene with which this dispensation opens reveals the whole doctrine we have just been considering. The two sons of Adam are introduced in the character of worshippers. "Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord; and Abel brought of the firstlings of his flock, and of the fat thereof." Let us for a moment look at these altars. The eldest son has gathered the rich corn, the flowers, the fruits, in profusion. The very air seems loaded with the sweet perfume of the gift; and he stands by his offering with conscious satisfaction that he has offered to his God a service worthy of his acceptance. Apart stands another altar; but, O! how different! The life's blood of a poor lamb has just ebbed out; the crimson tide has run all round the altar; the panting innocent has just ceased to breathe; and a youth stands by the victim. Upon his face is the trace of a calm sorrow, mingled with conscious rectitude. And where are our sympathies, dear friends? Does not nature within us say, "With the flowers and the fruits,"? Does not nature, as it were, recoil from the last quivering

death-struggle of the firstling of the flock? And more than that: not only is our sympathy enlisted on the side of the sweet and the beautiful, but we are ready to confess how one shews the labour and the work of his hands, and that of which he has reason to be proud. Now, imagine we had never heard the result before, and it was announced to us for the first time,—nay, before our eyes, the sight of the devouring fire consuming Abel's offering, told that "the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering, but unto Cain and to his offering the Lord had not respect",—we should be all astonishment, until the Holy Ghost explains, as in Hebrews xi. 4, that "By FAITH Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts." Therefore, the secret lies in this: that, in the one offering, *Faith* was in exercise; in the other, *Works*. Just so. And in these two presentations of worship are exemplified the two great religions of the world,—the *Religion of Works*, and the *Religion of Faith*. And under these two great divisions all religion classifies itself. The worshipper comes before God on his own merits, or on the merits of another. The former believes in the ability of the natural man to please God; the latter confesses his total bankruptcy, and pleads a victim. The one is Nature!—bold, unhumbled Nature!—proud of her own powers, and insisting on her capability of procuring and presenting an offering that she deems God ought and should accept. The other has "lost all confidence in the flesh," and, in the consciousness of utter worthlessness, presents the emblem of a forfeited existence; lifts up the beseeching eye of faith, and points to the reeking victim, crying "God be merciful to me a sinner"; accept, I beseech Thee, this atoning sacrifice, and let his life go for my life. "And God had respect unto Abel and his offering, but unto Cain and his offering God had not respect." Now, observe this great and all-important truth: the worshipper and his offering *stand or fall together*. Abel and his offering are accepted; Cain and his offering are rejected. You cannot separate them: the worshipper is part and parcel of his offering; they are identified. It is a transaction in which three parties are indissolubly implicated: God, the worshipper, and the sacrifice. The worshipper approaches God on what he deems an acceptable offering, and God regards the worshipper in the light of his offering; and, therefore, it follows that an essential principle of worship must be the reciprocal understanding of what constitutes an acceptable offering before God. This is the doctrine of the Cross.

There was a day in Eden when the offering that Cain brought was just what God could have accepted at the hand of man. There was no

tant on the scent of the rose; the lily's purity was an emblem of its Maker. The earth's sweet products were as acceptable to God as the sinless being who, in guilelessness, presented them. But all was now changed. That earth was now under the curse, and was to throw up spontaneously noxious weeds, as its guilty master was henceforth out of the heart to send forth "evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies," Matt. xv. 19. And Cain knew all this. There was, then, a bold and utter defiance cloaked under his offering. He knew that God had cursed the ground for man's sake, and he brings the fruit of the ground, which was no more nor less than the fruit of the curse, for God's acceptance. And the insulted Majesty of God had no respect to him and to his offering, for both were sinful in his sight. His brother, contrariwise, presents himself as a lost sinner—as under sentence of death—as feeling the burden of the curse. And his offering tells this tale; for the confession is, the penalty of "sin is death." But the doctrine of substitution, and yet identity in substitution, is set forth also: That bleeding, panting lamb is I; yes, I am there confessed in my sacrifice. My demerits, my well-earned curse, are being expiated. Pour out thy wrath on him, and let me go free. Accept me in my sacrifice, and by his stripes heal me. Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell. "And the LORD said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen? If (*orthós prosenekēs*) thou offerest correctly, or rightly, shalt thou not be accepted? And if thou offerest not correctly, sin lieth at the door." If the passage be translated thus, the whole scene is at once doctrinally explained. Cain approached the Lord without atonement, and was rejected. I feel it necessary to substantiate this light of the passage by reference. In Leigh's Bib. Sac., he says, "*De sacrificiis propriè usurpatur*" (It is often used peculiarly concerning sacrifices); and then he quotes three passages:—Matt. v. 23: "If thou BRING thy gift to the altar; viii. 4: "Go thy way, shew thy thyself to the priest, and OFFER the gift that Moses commanded"; Mark i. 44: "And OFFER for thy cleansing those things which Moses commanded." I might add to these, Acts vii. 42: "Have ye OFFERED to me slain beasts," &c.; xxi. 26: "Until that an offering should be OFFERED for every one of them"; Heb. v. 1: "For every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may OFFER both gifts and sacrifices for sins." See also Heb. v. 3, viii. 3 and 4; ix. 7 and 9, xiv. 25.

Orthós occurs in Luke vii. 43: "Thou hast RIGHTLY judged"; Luke x. 28: "Thou hast answered RIGHT: this do and thou shalt live"; xx. 21: "Master, we know that thou sayest and teachest RIGHTLY." I

dwell thus on this passage, not only as fully illustrating why God could not receive the sacrifice of Cain, but also because very many wrest the passage "If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted" to support a principle of works as the ground of our acceptance with God, which is to attempt "to bring a clean thing out of an unclean" to say "that the natural man can please God," or, in other words, to subvert the gospel of God, and to render the atonement of Christ an unnecessary sacrifice.

This condescension on the part of God served not to appease the irritated Cain, and his latent hatred at length burst out, and he arose and slew his brother. "And wherefore slew he him?" asks the Apostle (1 John iii. 12), "because his own works (alluding to his sacrifice) were evil, and his brother's righteous"; therefore he adds—"Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you."

A clear and recorded distinction is given between a righteous seed in the person of Seth, who was appointed, as the mourning mother said, "in the stead of Abel whom Cain slew," and the descendants of the fratricidal Cain, "who went out from *the presence of the Lord* and dwelt in the land of Nod" (which signifies 'vagabond'), and thus forms a true type of those who shall be punished "with everlasting destruction from the PRESENCE OF THE LORD, and from the glory of his power, when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe" (2 Thess. ii. 9). Henceforth, then, we regard him "as without God, and therefore without hope in the world." And we see him and his progeny making the world their home; they build cities and call them after own name; they become celebrated for arts and manufactures; music and the great attractions of the world are ascribed to his descendants (verses 17 and 22). How little do we reflect on this when we bestow such unqualified praise on these attractive, and, as are often thought, essential accomplishments, and quite forget their rise, and the worldly element in which they were first nurtured, and of which they form so large an ingredient.

Let us now leave Abel "asleep in Jesus," and let us regard one of whom "it is witnessed that he liveth." "And all the days of Enoch were three hundred and sixty-five years, or a year of years. And Enoch walked with God; and he was not; for God took him." Thus, therefore, after a long list of those who lived and "they died," arrives one, who, after passing just one-third the life of man in those days, instead of dying, is caught up without dying; "was not"; ceased to be among the children of men, "for God took him." And of whom is this raptured saint a type, but of another and more numerous rapture of the saints alive at the coming of the Lord, who die not, but are changed in

a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at his coming?—even “We that are alive and remain to the coming of the Lord” (1 Thess. iv. 17). Nor, as we shall see when we enter on the Mosaic or Legal Dispensation, is this saint the only one whom God has distinguished by so illustrious a preference; but in the two great economies—the Ante-Diluvian and the Mosaic—each one has been favored with the token of God’s intention concerning a more numerous company, who shall be privileged with this eclectic call from among the living.

As the arguments upon this all-important, but too widely-denied doctrine of “the First Resurrection,” will form a discourse of itself, in its own proper order of the series, I do no more now than endeavour to familiarize your minds with the fact, that it is not an UNHEARD of thing, that, while the rest of mankind is left on earth, one—as in the cases of Enoch and Elijah—and thousands, as in the case of these “that are Christ’s at his coming” (1 Cor. xv. 23)—should be taken from among their fellow men. And that it is neither improbable nor impossible, but a revealed truth, that the Sovereign of the universe, who doeth all things “according to the pleasure of HIS WILL,” “and giveth not account of any of his matters,” should gather to Himself, for the manifestation of the work of His Son Christ Jesus, in bringing many sons unto glory, an elect portion of the objects of redemption, who may have been the subjects of His grace up to the second advent of our Lord.

It is well worthy of note that this holy man’s career is summed up in a sentence that speaks volumes—“Enoch walked with God.” This expression, “walk,” is a very familiar one, as indicating, from its natural signification, the motion of the body, in its course from one place to another,—a very lively emblem of the manner of a man’s life, as in Rom. vi. 4, “Even so we also should walk in newness of life,” and Eph. iv. 1, “I beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called.” “To walk with God,” then, is to live in such holy and sweet communion as to have a continual and abiding sense of his presence, and is similar to the word (Rom. viii. 1) “who walk after the Spirit.” Thus this ante-diluvian saint walked, and to him, before his translation, was this testimony given, that “he pleased God.” To him also was granted a revelation, as yet unaccomplished, but intimately connected with the great event of which he was about to be a type. I allude to his celebrated prophecy, recorded by Jude: “And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them, of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches

which ungodly sinners have spoken against him." You will observe that it is the "Lord comes *with his saints*" to do this; "therefore, at one period or another, they must have joined him, as they could not come with him unless they had previously met him." It is a similar passage to the 5th verse of the 14th chapter of Zechariah: "And the Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with thee," to execute judgment on these ungodly enemies who are found gathered against him; at which time, we are told in the following verses, "And the Lord shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one Lord, and his name ONE." Thus, then, from among men, this man of God is taken away, leaving a world fast settling down in fearful iniquity, as in Matt. xxiv. 39: "So shall also the coming of the Son of Man"; "Then shall two be in the field, the one shall be taken and the other left"; and in the xxxv. 11: "Then they that were ready went in with him to the marriage; and the door was shut."

We now come to the great apostacy, described in the 6th chapter. "The population of the earth had become great, and daughters were born unto them; and the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair, and they took them wives of all which they chose. And the Lord said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years. There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare to them, the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown. And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence, for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth." This is a frightful picture; but that it can be traced to pious people marrying unconverted women, although it may do the least violence to our natural ideas, and may be the easiest way of disposing of the difficulty, yet expositors do not generally agree in this explanation.

There is a great and doubtful mystery hanging over the whole story; nor is it my intention to go very far in probing it: I would rather refer to those who have written critically on the subject. Great part of the argument turns on who are these "sons of God"? who are the giants? whither came they? and what sort of iniquity could be so irredeemably leavening, as to leave no alternative but to sweep every living creature from off the face of the earth? Now, the most ancient view of the subject is, that these sons of God were not human beings at all, but some order of Angels. The words "sons of God" are never applied in the

Old Testament to any but angels. In Job i. 6, they are introduced thus: "Now, there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them"; and in chapter ii., the same account is given. And from this, it is manifest this title was applied to angels as *created* beings, as the Holy Ghost says of Adam—"who was the son of God by creation" (Luke iii. 38); and that the term was applied to Satan as well as other superhuman beings, who, we know, are of many orders. And then these giants, of whom it adds (4th verse), "the same became mighty men, men of renown which were of old," shews that no common production sprung from this mixed alliance. It is no small evidence that some manuscripts of the LXX. read (*angeloi*) angels, instead of (*uiot*) sons; and it is certain that the view, that there was an angelic intrusion, was held by the ancient Synagogue and Church, by Josephus, and by the most ancient of the fathers, among whom, according to Kurtz, may be reckoned Justin, Clemens, Alex. Tertullian, Cyprian, &c.; and that it was not till Augustine, and Theodoret, and others of the fourth century, wrote against it, that the view was at all disputed. But in this, as well as in other points, we often find the solution in the Bible itself. Now, Peter, as it seems to me, refers to this event in 2 Ep. ii. 4-5: "For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness to be reserved unto judgment, and spared not the old world, but spared Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly; and turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrha into ashes, condemned them with an overthrow, making them an ensample unto those that should after live ungodly; and delivered just Lot," &c. And to the same effect in Jude, 6th verse: "And THE ANGELS *which kept not their first estate, but left THEIR OWN HABITATION*, he hath reserved in everlasting chains, under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day. *Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them, in like manner*, giving themselves over to fornication, AND GOING AFTER STRANGE FLESH, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire." Now, we have in these two passages, distinctly stated, an analogy between the iniquity of certain angels and the inhabitants of certain cities; and these latter are declared to have, *in like manner*, sinned as the angels, by changing the whole course of nature, and going after strange flesh; and further, their judgments are alike, calling for a direct and premature manifestation of the wrath of God. Now, it is acknowledged that Satan and his angels are not the angels alluded to here, for we know that they *are not in chains*, but yet at liberty, and we are warned of the manner in which

they are walking about, "seeking," watching, and effecting the destruction of man; consequently, *they* cannot be meant in this passage. But there is another text (1 Cor. xi. 10) where the apostle says—"For this cause ought the woman to have a covering on her head because of the angels." Now, what possible connection can we form between this command and the cause, but by falling back upon the remote tradition and its abhorrent consequences, and that the veiling of females, as a custom, runs into the farthest antiquity, and seems a memorial of precaution.

It is not agreeable to the object of these discourses to further dwell on these passages. Those who wish to see the arguments of the learned on the subject may consult a whole host of authorities that are enumerated in "Kurtz," on the "History of the Old Covenant"; and those who seek a more simple exposition can find it in the works of that popular Bible Commentator, Kitto, in his "Daily Bible Illustrations," under "Ante-Diluvians and Patriarchs," p. 129. And I think the sound criticism of the former, and the plain exposition of the latter, may set any one tolerably clear on the subject, and will shew on what is based the whole Heathen Mythology, which consists of legends, in which this event is clearly the origin of the tale, and the introduction of hero-worship. At any rate, it is a more reasonable ground for comprehending what must have been that disastrous ruin that spread its contagion through the whole of the families on the earth but Noah's; and how totally different from the ordinary outbursts of sin and violence that must have been, which was pronounced as having changed the whole course of nature. It is sufficient for my purpose to establish a vast and universal apostacy, calling for the direct interference of judgment; and that, out of that judgment, God was able to deliver an elect remnant, not by translating them to heaven, but by preserving them alive through the judgment, and establishing them anew upon the earth after his indignation had been poured upon it.

The 7th chapter opens with God's approval of Noah, as the only righteous one found in that generation. The means of his deliverance was the ark, built not only at the command of God, but all its proportions after the express direction of God; and herein, as in all matters where God immediately brings himself into direct dealing with man, the most explicit orders are given, and nothing is left for man to invent, alter, or suggest, for His thoughts are not as man's thoughts, nor His ways man's ways. This we shall more particularly observe in the following dispensations; and I only remark, in passing, that the same invariable line of action is discoverable in all the great emergencies where God has interposed. And the reason is obvious; for He who

brings the destruction can alone deliver; He who knows before the measure of the calamity, can alone find the adequate remedy. Now, this may seem a very simple statement; but, because it is so plain, it is very hard to receive. Man is forever altering God's plans, either putting something to them, or taking something from them. To do just what God says, and no more, is the great practical result of faith. Faith never asks questions; it obeys, and leaves the result and consequences with God; its language is, "I know in whom I have believed, and I am persuaded he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day" (2 Tim. i. 12). Faith always honors God, because it trusts only in God. We shall see this all-important doctrine meeting us in every stage of our considerations. If Enoch walked with God, how must the daily preparation of this great ark have kept the heart of Noah in continual communion with God, and daily contemplation of the solemn judgment that had been now foretold, and, as is supposed, according to Gen. vi. 3, to have been fixed at the limit of 120 years, called by St. Peter "the long-suffering of God waiting in the days of Noah while the ark was a preparing,"—that period in the which Noah established the great title of a "Preacher of Righteousness" (2 Pet. ii. 5), and fully warned the world of their coming doom. And thus he went on, working and preaching, his actions fully illustrating his belief; "for they that do these things, declare plainly that they seek a country," says St. Paul. At last, the day of mercy closes: "Seven days more," saith God, "and the waters shall be upon the earth." What a week of fearful suspense! How persuasive, how imploring must have been these last appeals of the great preacher! How he must have wept as he contemplated the hardened hearts of these mockers! At last, the order is given—"Come thou and all thy house into the ark." "And the Lord shut him in," verse 16;—yes, beloved, there is the real secret of security,—"God shut him in." And now the ark, and its living freight, is the special object of God's care; the hairs of their head are all numbered. "Fear not, little flock! it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." But, what terror now seizes the world! The same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the flood-gates of heaven were opened; and the rain was upon the earth forty days and forty nights. And the waters prevailed and bore up the ark, and it was lifted above the earth. What a sight to a perishing world! Is there no parallel to this? O yes! "Then shall they see the sign of the Son of Man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. For

as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark. And the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be. Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken and the other left. Watch, therefore; for ye know not at what hour your Lord doth come." Alas! the sight of the ark, like the future sign of the Son of Man, is only the signal for a general mourning. Regret and repentance come too late. "I will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh, when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you" (Prov. i. 26). Are men more watchful now than before the flood? or are they, as St. Peter says, willingly ignorant of the solemn example of the flood? In short, how few people there are that believe in the judgments of God which are plainly revealed as the close of this dispensation! and it seems a thing incredible to them, that, as God was pleased to punish the world with a most fearful judgment, and yet deliver a remnant by a special act of grace, he may do the same again. And they therefore insist that there can be no special judgment, but that these clear prophecies of the world's anguish and despair, and the visitation of the wrath of the Lamb of God upon an apostate church that has not abode in the goodness of God, are all to be confounded with the judgment of the great white throne, described in Rev. xx. 11-15, and of which and the description of these *pre-millennial judgments* there are not two things in common. Why should it seem a thing incredible to you, that, as God dealt once with the world, he may yet a second time purge it? Surely, the words of Isaiah (xxviii. 22) may be applied to this generation: "Now, therefore, be ye not mockers, lest your bands be made strong: for I have heard from the LORD GOD of hosts, a consumption, even determined upon the whole earth."

I forbear to say more on this at present, as in "the Dispensation of the Grace of God," or the present one, "the times of the Gentiles" will be so clearly traced for you from scripture as to convince any candid and unprejudiced inquirer that her day closes with such fearful and appalling scenes as may well make the stoutest heart to quail. I know these are unpalatable doctrines; I know that the heart naturally turns from them with aversion; and that they are subversive of that siren voice that lulls the sleeping virgins with the flattering note of "peace and safety," till at midnight she is roused by the startling cry—"Behold the Bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet him"; and then awakes to the bitter reflection that her dream of peace was, as her Master told her, the sure precursor of "sudden destruction."

But, there is still a further allusion to this scene, made by the Apostle Peter (1 Epist. iii. 21), and embracing a doctrine of the highest importance. He says—"When once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, *wherein few*—that is, eight souls—were saved by water. The like figure, whereunto baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who is gone into heaven, and is at the right hand of God; angels, and authorities, and powers being made subject unto him." Thus, therefore, we may study the scene as a type of baptism, of which ordinance the apostle at once stamps the importance. Now, the passage requires a very careful examination, for upon it is built the ultra view of baptismal regeneration; while, at the same time, it guards us against trifling with the ordinance, as if it were a mere form of introduction into the outward or visible church. Leighton, in his admirable commentary on the First Epistle of Peter, expresses so thoroughly what I mean that I shall quote his words (page 473): "Thus, then, we have a true account of the power of this, and so of other sacraments, and a discovery of the error of two extremes: (1) of those who ascribe too much to them, as if they wrought by a natural, inherent virtue, and carried grace in them inseparably; (2) of those who ascribe too little to them, making them only signs and badges of our profession. Signs they are, but more than signs merely representing; **THEY ARE MEANS EXHIBITING, AND SEALS CONFIRMING GRACE TO THE FAITHFUL.** They are, then, in a word, neither *empty signs* to them who *believe*, nor *effectual causes of grace*, to them who *believe not*. Now, that which is intended for our help, our carnal minds are ready to turn into a hindrance and disadvantage. The Lord representing invisible things to the eye, and confirming his promises even to visible seals, we are apt, from the grossness of our spiritual hearts, instead of stepping up by that which is earthly, to the Divine Spiritual things represented, to stay in the outward element, and go no further."

"The like figure, whereunto baptism doth also now save us." Here again, then, we have the great and important feature of union and identity in the plan of salvation. The ark and its redeemed freight sink or swim together. Christ and the Church are in the same boat; and, though the waters of the sea of Galilee may rise at the coming down of the great storm of wind upon the lake; though the Master may be asleep on the pillow, wearied and worn, in the hinder part of the ship; and, to outward appearance, they may be in a great strait, until, in bitterness of distress, they may cry, "We perish,"—it is only to receive

the well-merited rebuke, and the solemn demand of where was their faith, to suppose that what Christ had engaged to keep, the gates of hell could ever prevail against. We see that the subjects of this blessing, therefore, are those within the ark—Christians or Believers; that because the ark, or Christ, passed safely through the billows of the wrath of God into resurrection, these believers are carried with him out of that wrath; and that whereas he entered a haven of rest, or “is gone into heaven” (22nd verse), they are borne there also; and further, that whereas he is sitting on the right hand of God, the saved ones “are made to sit together with him”; and that, in the ordinance, it is not to be understood that the filth of the flesh is put away, *this* can only be done by the blood of Christ; but it is the answer of a good conscience towards God—an outward confession, as Paul saith (Rom. x.), unto salvation, after a belief with the heart unto righteousness, and is a most significant and appropriate emblem of the great doctrine of Justification, to which the apostle points when he says “by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.” Now, the Apostle Paul, in Rom. iv. 25, writes—“Who was delivered for our offences,”—“bare our sins in his own body on the tree (Peter), and was raised again for our justification.” And here it is that the answer of a good conscience comes in, for we are told in the Hebrew Epistle (chap. x.), that herein lay the impotency of all the ritual sacrifices, that they failed to give the conscience peace. But, if I have savingly received the doctrine, and unite myself by faith to the sacrifice of Christ,—the Holy Ghost, whose office it is “to take of the things of Christ and shew them unto us,” at once conveys the full efficacy of the three great passages of atonement, to wit: 1st. The satisfaction of the penalty due to sin; “Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures” (1 Cor. xv. 3). 2nd. The acceptance of the atonement proved by the resurrection, and the consequent “justification” of the believer (Rom. iv. 25). And 3d. The ascension of Christ Jesus to the right hand of the Father is the assurance of the complete acceptance of all for whom Christ died, of which the Holy Ghost is witness, and by his in-dwelling in the bodies of believers, becomes the earnest of their eternal inheritance, and enables the conscience to “rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory receiving the end of their faith, even the salvation of their souls” (1 Peter i. 9). And, so perfect and complete in the mind of God is this *Redemption, Justification, Acceptance, and Sanctification*, that the Apostle John says (1 John iv. 17), “Because AS HE IS, so ARE WE IN THIS WORLD.” Let me ask you, believer in Christ, did you ever read this passage before? and, reading it, did you ever think of its meaning? and, thinking of its meaning, do you

believe it! Aye, do you believe that the Eternal regards *you*, a poor, failing, short-coming, but redeemed sinner, as so accepted in the Beloved, that as He is, seated in the Heavenlies, in all the perfection of Righteousness, so *are you* now regarded by your Heavenly Father; not by and by! hereafter! "**BUT NOW IN THIS WORLD ARE *like Jesus*."** If you do, you know God; you believe the Scriptures; you exalt Christ Jesus. If you do not, "you make God a liar, for you do not believe the record that God has given of His Son" (1 John v. 11-15). Let me ask you, then, where am I to look for the answer of a good conscience towards God by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who is gone into heaven, &c.? and which the believer is said to exemplify unto salvation by the obedience unto baptism, which ordinance, as has been shewn from Scripture, signifieth the burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ, for the justification of the Church? Shall I find it in the baptized and unconscious infant of the present day? You know well I shall not. And for this reason, an ordinance replete with meaning, full of consolation and joy, "an outward and visible sign, of an inward and spiritual grace," is made the tool of a meaningless introduction into the Church. I call it meaningless, because there is no dissenter, who pretends to use this ordinance after (what he calls) a scriptural fashion, but will tell you that the subject of this ordinance is not a member thereby of the Church, but is simply put under the charge of the Church, or dedicated; that an ordinance, which sets forth my justification by a risen Jesus, and conveys to my soul the answer of a good conscience from what my Saviour has done for me, is made to mean nothing at all. And the anomaly becomes worse as you carry a dissenter's scheme out; for, as he only baptizes the children of believers, and refuses the children of the unconverted, the curious, but every-day circumstance occurs, that the young privileged baptized one runs a race of such worldliness as to put him outside the arena of moral men, much more of the Church; while the unconscious infant who had been refused because of his worldly parents, called by the grace of God, and converted, on application for church fellowship, and discovery of his unbaptized condition, is now required to express his faith in the ordinance which his soul has learned to give a willing assent unto. And what may I ask is this but **BELIEVER BAPTISM?** And what possible good have you effected by the baptism of the wretched sinner whom you received with such ceremony in the days of his unconsciousness, and who now scorns you.

I know I tread on most sensitive ground while I thus express the truths connected with this solemn subject. But "if I pleased men," as St. Paul says, "I should not be the servant of Christ." And as the

subject comes prominently before us in our course, and has been so emphatically alluded to by the apostle, it was our duty before God to see whether our views were scriptural or not. You may soon judge whether your baptism has availed you anything or not. Has it conveyed to your soul the answer of a good conscience towards God? If not, the Scripture tells you that it has not accomplished what it was intended to do, and was therefore useless. Now, there is perfect consistency in the exposition given by the great National Establishment of baptism; for in her catechism she pointedly asks, What the preparation is for a right reception of the ordinance? and she teaches her disciple thus: "Repentance whereby we forsake sin, and faith whereby we stedfastly believe the promises of God made to us in that ordinance." Can anything be more scriptural? Secondly, she teaches further, that in baptism the recipient was made "a member of Christ," "a child of God," and "an inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven."

And does Peter and Paul say less? By no means. And, did *those churches rigidly keep up* to their PREREQUISITE and their CONSEQUENCE, they might safely challenge the whole body of Dissenters to face those truths, and refute them. But, alas! their practice is not agreeable to their declaration, for the application of these rich scriptural truths are made by proxy the property of all. Repentance and faith are ascribed, on the declaration of sponsors, as effectual on behalf of the infant, who is pronounced "regenerated" thereby. And, consequently, three distinct vows are made on its behalf—vows fully in accordance with *Regeneration*, and *utterly impracticable without it*, viz.: 1st. That they will renounce the devil and *all his works*, the *pomps* and *vanities of this wicked world*, and *all the sinful lusts of the flesh*. And to this agree the words of St. John (1 Ep. ii.), "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of THE FLESH, and the lust of THE EYES, and THE PRIDE OF LIFE, is not of the Father, but of the world." But he adds: "Whatsoever is BORN OF GOD overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God." 2ndly. That they will keep all God's holy law and commandments. 3rdly. That they will walk in the same all the days of their life. And this is expressly what St. Paul quotes as a consequence of the new covenant (Heb. x. 16): "I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more." Now, all this would be most desirable, if it was only true. But these regenerated infants turn out most un-regenerated youths; and,

instead of renouncing the pomps and vanities of this wicked world, there is no pomp, vanity, or pride of life pertaining to to "this *wicked world*," they do not covet, and if they have the means, that they do not obtain, "as their fathers did, so do they." And what becomes of the baptism, and of the regeneration, and of the three mighty gifts communicated—"their membership of Christ," "their sonship of God," and "their inheritance of the Kingdom of Heaven"? If it was true once, it must be true always; "for the gifts and the calling of God are without repentance" (Rom. xi. 29).

But it is not true, as every day's experience proves. And, I hesitate not to say, there has been no doctrine that has made more Dissenters than this National Baptism, followed by a National Confirmation, which creates a National Church, which does away with the world; for the world is the Church.

But what, my brethren, have Dissenters done for us? Staggered and alarmed at what they saw before them, they set to work to reform the evil; which they attempted to do, not by keeping as much of the truth as there was, and pointing out where the error lay, and shewing that the inconsistency was in the practice, not in the doctrine—in the application, and not in the theory. But, they must needs rush into the opposite extreme, which compels them to nullify their own order, times without number, as I have shewn above, till some, dissatisfied with the result of it, have said, and written, that the ordinance was a mere form.

But, as some of the arguments in favor of infant baptism, in the case of the children of believers, are said to be founded on the Scriptures, it is our duty to see how far the usage is, or is not, supported thereby. In the first place, the advocates assume that the terms of the new covenant cannot be less extensive than the old; and if under that the children were immediately brought into covenant relationship, why not under the new? And secondly, it is further affirmed that the offspring of believers are holier than that of the thoughtless and unconverted—"A holy seed," as it is called—and you are referred, for proof, to 1 Cor. vii. 14: "For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy."

As to the first, I suppose it will be acknowledged by all that the old covenant was made with Abraham and with his posterity after the flesh, and that a descendant of that patriarch was in the covenant from the mere fact of his birth; as Paul says, "A Hebrew of the Hebrews,"—that is, a pure-blooded Israelite; and the sign of the covenant was in the flesh (Gen. xvii. 10-13). Now, let us look at the supposed ana-

logy. The grace of God introduces certain persons, through a living faith in Christ Jesus, into a new covenant; and they are, in consequence, called in Scripture "believers" (Acts v. 14), "saints" (Rom. i. 7), "sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty" (2 Cor. vi. 18, 1 John iii. 2). Now, certain of these believers "marry in the Lord"—i. e., with each other—and their children are said to be born in the covenant. In the covenant of what?—the flesh or the spirit? Certainly not the flesh, for that covenant is done away; certainly not the spirit, for there is no such thing as generation in the spirit, save by the Holy Spirit, by whom the parents themselves were born "the children of God, through the incorruptible seed of the word of God" (1 Peter i. 23). But the Apostle Paul tells us that all "were by nature the children of wrath" (Eph. ii. 3). And surely John iii. 6 settles the matter—"That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the spirit is spirit"; as also the 1st chapter and 13th verse—"Which were born NOT OF BLOOD" (i. e., Not from Father to Son, not by descent), "nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." Now, how beautifully do the apostles write about the infants of the new covenant! Paul calls them "babes in Christ" (1 Cor. iii. 1). Peter says (1 Ep. ii. 2), "As new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby." John writes to them (1 Ep. ii. 11-13), "My little children," &c. But who are these? is it this privileged class of the natural-born children of believers? Assuredly not; but those whom, Paul says, are "begotten through the gospel" (1 Cor. iv. 15); and John also (1 Ep. v. 18), "Begotten of God," &c. Now, let us look at the text on which these offspring of believers are said to be holy. Paul supposes two cases—a believing woman who finds herself yoked to an unbelieving husband, and a believing husband yoked to an unbelieving wife; and the question arose whether they were to be separated, and the apostle decides—No; for, he argues, referring to the ceremonial law of "clean and unclean," and "sanctified and holy," that she is not defiled by her union with this heathen, for that the institution of marriage being an ordinance of God, the woman is not defiled by eating and drinking and living with this infidel, or heathen, as it was at that time; and then he adds—For if the marriage is not sanctified (that is, clean) to the believer, on the same principle the children are unclean; but, if the marriage is sanctified or clean, the children are clean or holy, and the woman is no more defiled by the children than she is by the husband, for both relationships—wife and husband, mother and son—are of God; and he concludes by saying, that if the husband die, she may marry again, but under this restriction—"only in the Lord" (39th verse).

Now, I can safely say that the use of these words, "sanctified," "unclean," and "holy," are used more than fifty times in the sense they are here explained; and you may just as well say this infidel heathen was sanctified to God as the children; and as you know it is not true of the one, neither is it of the other.

There is now only one more argument to sustain the practice, and this relies on what is termed "household baptism"—that is, where, on the record of one individual being converted, the baptism of his whole house followed. Now, these examples are—1st in Acts xvi., the conversion of Lydia, whose heart the Lord opened, and who was baptized, "and her household." Now, there is not the slightest evidence to prove that the woman was married at all, but everything to shew that she was not; for, had she been married, we should certainly not have had the husband classed among HER household. And, moreover, you generally find, that, where women are especially mentioned, their estate are mentioned also; as "Peters' wife" and "the mother of James," "the mother of Zebedee's children," "the wife of Chusa"; and if they are widows, it is stated also—as, "Anna was a widow." Now, as the description of Lydia is only as "a seller of purple," a person in business, she naturally had assistants in her house to carry on her trade, and they doubtless believed like their mistress. In the case of the jailor (23rd and 34th verses of the same chapter), it is said that "they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and TO ALL that were in his house"; then "he and all his are baptized straightway, and (it adds) REJOICED, BELIEVING IN GOD, WITH ALL HIS HOUSE": therefore, ALL HIS HOUSE were undoubtedly entitled to be baptized. Lastly, the household of Stephanas, whom Paul baptized (1 Cor. i. 16): in their case, also, it is quite as strong as the jailor's family, for (in the same Epistle, xvi. 15) "the house of Stephanas had addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints"; so that not only does this house believe with all their hearts, but ordained themselves, for that is the real word (*etaxan*) which is *always used*, either as *appointed* or *ordained*; and I cannot conjecture why the word "addicted" is put in, unless, perhaps, the example might lead to the unclerical fashion of the saints "ordaining themselves to the ministry." "Would God (as Moses says) all the Lords' servants were prophets," and that they would see their responsibility before God to edify one another and exercise the gifts, which they may be burying, and for which one day they have to give the Master rigid account. But, to return: where, in all this, is the scriptural authority for the baptism of infants, either those of believers or unbelievers? I see it not. But you say, "What will you do, then, for your children?" Do for them? what

should I do, but train them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord? and when I see them truly receiving Jesus into their hearts by faith, and they know the death on Calvary and the burial and resurrection of Jesus, they will learn to obey him, who saith "HE that BELIEVETH and is baptized shall be saved; and he that believeth not"—observe, now, there is not a word said about baptizing where there is no belief! it is added, "shall be damned." Now, had the command, according to the almost universal practice, read—"He that is baptized and believes, shall be saved; but he that is baptized and does not afterwards believe, shall be damned," the whole controversy would end. But, rest assured, as long as the Scripture stands as it does, there will always be, while the Church is on earth, a testimony—despised, abhorred, and insulted, I grant you, but yet a testimony!—a living testimony for the truth as it is in Jesus: "Believe and be baptized every one of you in the name of the Lord Jesus for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts ii. 38).

I shall, for the present, leave the subject; and, as we are now come to the close of the Ante-Diluvian Dispensation, let me draw your attention, before I conclude, to the distinct features of typical prophecy that have been illustrated, and which will appear in the succeeding Dispensations with greater developments, until we come to the fulfilment of some, and the more lucid and particular explanations of others; and yet the same truths.

And, 1st. We learn "that we all bear the image of the earthy" (1 Cor. xv. 49). "And Adam begat a son, in his own likeness after his image."

2nd. We see the two great religions in the world—the Natural and the Spiritual—the Religion of Works, and the Religion of Faith,—the doctrine of "Atonement" in contrast to "Self-Righteousness"; and this brings out "the offence of the cross," and they who are persecuted for righteousness' sake.

3rd. On apostasy setting in, an election according to grace is called out "in Seth; for God, said she (Eve), hath appointed me another seed instead of Abel" the slain one, who is

4th. A type of those who suffer with Jesus, who shall also reign with him (2 Tim. ii. 12); "And they who sleep in Jesus, whom God will bring with him" (1 Thess. iv. 14).

5th. The RAPTURE of the LIVING SAINT in the person of Enoch, who foreshadows those of whom it is said, "We which are alive and remain shall be caught up, together with them, in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord" (1 Thess. iv. 17).

6th. We see the climax of the apostacy, or utter degeneracy of the Dispensation. "All flesh corrupted his way upon the earth"; "Evil men and seducers wax worse and worse" (2 Timothy iii. 13); which brings on

7th. *The judgment on the Dispensation* when "the iniquity is come to the full.

8th. A remnant according to grace saved out of the midst of the overthrow, and preserved by God as the germ or seed of a new Dispensation.

Let me now ask, brethren, whether, while looking over the great chasm of time, and wandering over these Ante-Diluvian records of terrible scenes and terrible consequences, does a solemn awe pervade our minds? Do we rise from the scene as if we had been examining curious relics of far-gone ages? or does something akin to solemn horror strike your soul when you think of these myriads, of whom it is said that in the prison-house of despair they wait the judgment of the great day. Alas! sirs, I fear it is too true with many of you what Abraham said to Dives, "Though one went unto them from the dead they would not believe." No! I solemnly believe that were there now to be granted to us a vision of one, just as he left the earth four thousand years ago, with all the despair that perishing in the wild waters left on his haggard countenance,—I say, if he stood before us, and could tell what the anguish was that panic-struck the whole creation, when the flood-gates of heaven were opened, and the fountains of the great deep released from the fiat, "Hitherto shalt thou come but no further, and here shall thy proud waves be stayed," rose up in mountain waves, and with the roar of victory rushed upon the earth, as if once more reclaiming their ancient reign at Chaos; if he could picture the mute, statue-like horror with which men stood aghast while the contending elements drowned the wildest shrieks of perishing sinners; and if he could add to this the tale of the gloomy ages he had passed in the prison of the doomed, and could in solemn accents repeat the words of Christ—"Like as in the days that were before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; SO SHALL ALSO THE COMING OF THE SON OF MAN BE." And if, ere the wretched one went from us to return again to the region of darkness and of woe, he were to add—"Be warned by me and my eternal wretchedness, and remember it is written for you, 'Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of Man cometh'" ;—tell me, would you repent? would the sight make you shake off the stupor of this

world lethean slumber? would you ask yourself, What is this spell that drowns my senses, dims my sight, binds me like a galley-slave to the cursed launch, to toil and row in the stream of this world's ways till I drop senseless at the oar? How long would the revival last upon you? 'Till to-morrow? To-morrow shall find you out of the influence of the awakening voice; and then I see you, not the anxious inquirer who a few hours ago seemed only to live and hang upon the words of eternal life. Alas! how changed! Once more, the world has him. The keen bargain! the immense profit! the certain speculation! the smooth-tongued trade, has done its work—its fatal work! Immersed with sordid care, he returns "like a sow to her wallowing in the mire." Farewell! Thou art like Ephraim of old, of whom God said—"O Ephraim, what shall I do unto thee? O Judah, what shall I do unto thee? for your goodness is as a morning cloud, and as the early dew it goeth away" (Hos. vi. 4). One word more, by the Prophet Amos, and I have done: "I have overthrown some of you, as God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah, and ye were as a firebrand plucked out of the burning: yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the Lord. Therefore thus will I do unto thee, O Israel: and *because* I will do this unto thee, PREPARE TO MEET THY GOD, O ISRAEL."

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